

# Postscripts

The Jacksonville State University English Department Alumni Newsletter

## From Where I Sit: Perspectives from an Old Alabama Fan

Gena Christopher

At fifty, I have become accustomed to being one of the oldest ones in the crowd. When our family gathers for holidays and birthdays, I am the mother of grown children, the grandmother of five granddaughters. At faculty meetings, the younger instructors and professors talk about new ideas and popular books while I sit and smile, remembering the “old days” when I was a young, new teacher with big ideas. Of course, there are still places where someone who has reached half a century is not the oldest; in fact, I have discovered that I am often the youngest one in the crowd in these settings – the Golden Ager luncheons at church, dinnertime at the assisted living, the monthly meeting of the pink ladies at the hospital, and the auditorium at the Alabama Writers’ Symposium. It is no real surprise that there are many who have passed my age at the first three meetings, but I honestly never predicted the fourth, and it is this realization recently that caused me the greatest concern. In fact, I am sincerely worried that those who attend this annual meeting are aging rapidly, and there is no one in the wings to replace us.

The Alabama Writers’ Symposium is held in Monroeville, Alabama, each year during the first weekend in May. Writers who were born in our state or who chose this state to live in or to write about travel south to share their works and to honor their best and brightest. Well-known writers rub shoulders with those who have just written their first books. Over the twelve years that Alabama Southern has hosted this event, stars like Fannie Flag, George Plimpton, and Rick Bragg have been honored as Daniel Wallace, Frank Turner Hollan, and Tommy Franklin were introduced. The audience is filled with readers and writers, students and teachers, critics and fans.

I have attended the AWS six times. Some of my best memories are of those times in Monroeville, watching the local production of *To Kill a Mockingbird* being performed in the same courthouse where Gregory Peck portrayed Atticus Finch, talking with Fannie Flag about the importance of beauty pageants in the South and the dangers of fire batons, and striking up a conversation with Nelle Harper Lee as we both ate sausage biscuits covered in gravy at the local Hardee’s restaurant. I have eaten catfish from Dave’s, bought souvenirs decorated with drawings of Scout, Jem, and Dill, and drank many bottles of water – after all, they say that writing talent must be in the water in Monroeville, there have been so many fine writers from that one, small town. Once, I bought a signed copy of *TKaM* from Ms. Lee’s cousin at the video store/tanning salon, and another year, I even bought one from the back of a pickup truck.

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My first visit to the symposium led to my developing a course in Alabama literature for the JSU English Department. Ours was the first undergraduate course in the state, and there were only a couple of graduate courses that focused upon our state's writers at that time. In Monroeville, I met teachers from UA, AU, and UAB, not to mention AUM and Montevallo. We traded ideas about our courses and argued about which works are a must for students of AL lit. Guest scholars shared their knowledge of the writers they had studied and met. I learned that Mark Twain had an Alabama connection and that Julia Tutwiler's ghost resides in the vicinity of Kathleen Tucker Windham. I listened as a friend and colleague read a paper on Sena Jeter Naslund, and all the while, Ms. Naslund sat in the audience and listened, too. The education I received from my travels south every few years is one I could never have gained from books, tests, and research reports.

This leads me to the point of my concern. As I sat in the audience of the Alabama Writers' Symposium this year, I saw many friends and acquaintances from my previous visits to Monroeville. A couple had retired from teaching but were still interested in the writers of our state. Most were as old as I, and many were older. I did not see a single young person who was not there to present a book he or she had written. When an author panel called for a scholar/moderator, the moderator was always senior faculty at one of the representative universities. The junior college president who had welcomed visitors to his campus for the last twelve years announced his retirement. The extremely flamboyant, rather large, bottle blonde mayor who loved large earrings and brightly-colored dresses had been replaced, and Judge Roy Biggs, whose financial backing helped to open the Center for the Study of Alabama Writers, had passed away. One may assume at this point that my concern is the demise of this conference, but that isn't it at all.

I am worried beyond relief that my generation will be the last to celebrate the outstanding writers of our state, and we have many. I know that reports say we are 49<sup>th</sup> in most everything – everything good, that is. We are 49<sup>th</sup> in health care, 49<sup>th</sup> in the number of houses with Internet connections, and 49<sup>th</sup> in education. But, honestly, I believe that we are probably number 1 in states with best-selling writers, in quality writers, in writers whose works appeal to an international audience, in writers who are just plain fun to read. Sure, Mississippi has its Eudora Welty; Georgia will always have Flannery O'Connor; and Washington state has Stephenie Meyer's Twilight series, but we have the writers of such popular works as *Forrest Gump*, *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café*, *Crazy in Alabama*, *All Over but the Shoutin'*, *Big Fish*, *October Sky*, even *The Bad Seed*. There are too many to name, yet I know few young scholars or teachers who have any interest in or knowledge of this gold mine of literature.

I suppose I should not be too unhappy that university professors are not studying the writers of Alabama when completing their doctorates and writing their dissertations. I tried not to be offended when a colleague called Alabama lit "low culture" as opposed to the "high culture" of the literary works she found intriguing, and I laughed along when a colleague stated that the term "Alabama literature" is an oxymoron. I didn't tell him where I thought the real moron was standing. I just smiled and walked away, knowing that there were true scholars across our state and region who knew that Alabama literature is not only real, but it is alive and growing. And, that there is a growing audience across the world who see the quality of our state's writers. But, my trip to Monroeville a few weeks ago caused me great concern.

What if no one in the younger generation becomes interested in studying our state's literature? Several years ago, the Chicago Public Library decided to try something new. Every person in Chicago was asked to read the same book in the same month's time. This included everyone from the youngest child to the oldest adult. The project was a great success, so this attempt at widespread literacy caught on, and soon other cities across the United States were choosing the same work. What was the book the wise citizens of Illinois chose? It was *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Likewise, Rick Bragg told an audience in Jacksonville, Alabama, his hometown, that his book publisher sent him all over the Midwest but did not schedule him in many events in Alabama, not even in the town where he grew up and began his writing career. These are just

two examples, but there are many more to establish the fact that we may ignore our greatest writers, but the rest of the world does not.

What about classroom teachers? What difference does it make if they know about or teach their students about writers from Alabama? Students are more interested in reading about people who are like them in some way or to whom they can relate than they are interested in reading about the past. Doesn't it make sense that a twelve-year-old boy in Alabama will enjoy a poem about bass fishing or basketball more than he will one about a Grecian urn? If our teachers studied Alabama literature or were interested in learning about the writers who are living and writing in our state, then that boy might get the opportunity to read Charles Ghigna's poetry instead of some dead British poet's. A high school girl who is concerned about her physical appearance (and what high school girl isn't?) might find comfort in the fact that Barbara Robinette Moss overcame her own fears. But, if the teacher has never read *Change Me Into Zeus's Daughter*, how will the student ever discover this moving Alabama memoir?

I know that every teacher of English or Language Arts cannot travel to Monroeville in the spring to attend the Alabama Writers' Symposium – I even understand why many do not want to. Travel is expensive, and South Alabama in the springtime is hot and humid. However, I cannot understand teachers who live and teach in our state, and who teach literature, but are not interested in teaching the literature of our state. And, I am most concerned that when this generation passes the torch to the next, it will be a torch whose flame burns less brightly because of the torch-holders' lack of knowledge of those writers who make our state shine.

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## **On The Brink**

ON THE BRINK presented something different this year. Instead of its usual morning with eight authors, it offered two "homecomings" for writers with JSU affiliations. March 31 saw Randy Owen talk about his experiences as a new writer and featured his book *Born Country*. May 11 welcomed Rick Bragg on the occasion of the paperback release of his newest book *The Prince of Frogtown*. Both evenings were departures from OTB's previous format and were warmly received. English Department members working with ON THE BRINK are Christy Burns, Gena Christopher, and Steven Whitton.

For information about the 2010 conference go to  
<http://www.jsu.edu/depart/english/allbrink.htm>.

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## **Imagining the Holocaust**

Imagining the Holocaust is the English Department's ongoing commitment to Holocaust studies. Its major component is a writing competition for Alabama students. Submissions from public and private middle and high schools from around the state were evaluated by panels of judges. Winners are chosen in poetry and fiction and were awarded the following prizes in the form of US Savings Bonds: First prize: \$100 bond; Second prize: \$75 bond; Third prize: \$50 bond. Coordinator of the middle school competition was Margaret Copeland, who also announced the winners at the JSU Holocaust Remembrance April 13. Coordinator of the high school competition was John Hickman. Steven Whitton chaired the project.

See also <http://www.jsu.edu/depart/English/holocaust/holocaust.html> for more information.

## Another Successful Year for Sigma Tau Delta

This past fall, Sigma Tau Delta had its annual Scary Story read-around in October and its induction ceremony for new members in November. The group also sponsored two Get-Acquainted-with-Sigma-Tau-Delta sessions in Stone Center to recruit new members. In February, the group hosted its annual Worst Love Poem contest. In March, the annual Faculty Scholar Lecture featured Dr. Steven Whitton of the English Department, who did a presentation on the war novels of William Bradford Huie. The group sponsored a “Nuttiest Professor on Campus” contest to raise money for Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, a book project for children from birth to five years old, spearheaded by United Way of East Central Alabama. The group presented a check for \$75 to the library. Winner of the event was Gloria Horton of the Department of English.

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## Jacksonville State University Writing Project

The Jacksonville State University Writing Project site had another successful year, beginning with the summer institute in July 2008, at which twelve teacher fellows read, wrote, presented, and learned together as much as they could about being successful teachers of writing. The participants for the institute were as follows: Don Bennett, Jacksonville State University; Sabrina Brandon, Faith Christian School; Deborah Fancher, Oxford Elementary School; Mark Fuller, Oxford High School; Autumn Martin, Centre Middle School; Joy McCartney, The Bridge, Attalla City Schools; Pam Miller, Centre Middle School; Nona Rogers, The Bridge, Attalla City Schools; Kyle Shelton, Duran Jr. High School; Theresa Thomas, Munford High School; Patti Wilkinson, Faith Christian School; and Katie McCombs Wood, Duran Jr. High School.

In addition to the summer institute, the site held a number of other events, beginning with the Writing in the Twenty-First Century Conference in July, cosponsored with the JSU Regional In-Service Center, at McClellan. More than fifty area teachers attended the event, keynoted by Kelly Gallagher, author of *Teaching Adolescent Writers*, with concurrent sessions provided by JSU Writing Project fellows. Another successful event was the second annual Technology Conference, sponsored by the site in October. Thirty area teachers spent the day learning about the latest classroom technologies.

The past year has been busy for our site in other ways. It site hosted an Advisory Board Retreat in January at Shocco Springs; twenty of our board members attended. The *JSU Writing Project Newsletter* was published in the spring. The eighth annual Language Arts Olympiad was held in April. Our writing group, Scribblers, continues to meet monthly, and a number of the group’s members have had works published this past year.

Plans are underway for the 2009 Summer Institute and for a mini-institute for new teachers to be held during the summer. Director of the JSU Writing Project is Gloria Horton; co-directors are Lisa Williams, Melissa Shields, and Lisa Light; technology liaison is Rodney Bailey.

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## JSU Writers Bowl

On October 29, 2008, the English Department sponsored the Thirteenth Annual JSU Writers Bowl. Fifty-two teams from high schools throughout northern Alabama traveled to the JSU campus to compete. The team competitions required students to write a letter of support for their choice of a classic monster on their high school faculty who deserves to be retained despite the current financial crisis. The teams were also required to write a poem following the pattern

of William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud." For the individual essay competition, students were asked either to discuss how high school students should be involved in the presidential election or to speculate what their generation will be contributing to American culture. JSU's Steven Whitton was the chair of the Writers Bowl Committee, assisted by Gena Christopher and Randy Davis. Submissions were judged by the following JSU faculty: Rodney Bailey, Don Bennett, Christy Burns, Larry Gray, Gloria Horton, Bill Hug, Raina Kostova, Joy Maloney, Elizabeth Nelson, Susan Sellers, and Misty Sandlin.

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## **Southern Playwrights Competition**

The Southern Playwrights Competition had another very successful year with more than fifty entries (and wonderfully cooperative readers). The 2009 winner of the Southern Playwrights Competition is Barry Bradford's *Conquistadors*. The 2008 winner, *Death by Darkness* by Elizabeth Orndorff, was presented by the Jacksonville State University Drama Department, June 25-28, 2009.

The competition is overseen by Joy Maloney and Steven Whitton. For more information, see <http://www.jsu.edu/depart/english/southpla.htm>.

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## **JSU Writers' Club**

The JSU Writers' Club had a busy and productive year. Members met weekly to share and discuss creative writing, held fundraisers, and actively sought to acquire new members. Additionally, many of the club's poets participated in a Villanelle challenge: each poet contributed an original work in that challenging poetic form to share and compare. Both the R.U.M. Poetry and Fiction contests were also a success. The Awards' Ceremony for the Poetry contest was particularly grand, including a reading by award-winning poet, Kathleen Thompson. *Something Else*, the Writers' Club literary magazine, will be available for purchase in September.

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## **English Department Adds Three New Faculty Members in 2008-2009**

**Douglas Franklin O'Keefe** joined the English Department in the Fall of 2008. Dr. O'Keefe completed his B.A. at Brown University, his M.A. at Columbia University, and his Ph.D. at Northwestern University. His dissertation is titled "Ballad Opera, Imitation, and the Formation of Genre." Dr. O'Keefe's interests include drama, playwriting, and cultural studies. Along with his duties as a classroom teacher, Dr. O'Keefe is sponsor of the JSU Writers' Club.

**Susan Shellhorse Ashley** also joined the English Department in the Fall. Ms. Ashley completed both her B.A. and her M. A. at JSU. Leaving behind a career in banking, she serves as an Instructor in the English Department; she has just completed the JSU National Writing Project Summer Institute, and she will serve on the University's Holocaust Committee in 2009.

**Mica Marker Mecham** joined the English Department in January of 2009. Her previous experiences include serving as a graduate student and adjunct instructor in JSU's Department of Learning Services and for the English Department. Ms. Mecham received both her B.A. and her M.A. from JSU, and she completed the JSU National Writing Project Summer Institute in 2007.

# English Department Foundation

We appreciate the large number of alumni, friends, and department members who have generously donated to the English department over the last year. Your donations help support our many programs.

Sonja J. Adams

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Tax-deductible donations to the English Department Foundation may be made through the JSU Foundation by directing mail to the JSU Foundation, 700 Pelham Road North, Jacksonville, AL 36265. Please indicate that the donation is for the English Department Foundation and, in case of memorial gifts, also signify the name of the honoree. Donations can also be made online by clicking on "Make a Gift" on the JSU Homepage ([www.jsu.edu](http://www.jsu.edu)). Thank you.

## Postscripts Bios

**Susan Ashley** joined the English faculty this year. She participated as a judge for several writing and speaking competitions including Southern Playwrights, “Imagining the Holocaust,” and the College of Arts and Sciences Student Symposium.

**Rodney Bailey** is the Technology Liaison for the JSU Writing Project. He also directs technology conferences for the writing project along with his teaching duties for the English Department.

**Don Bennett** has been an instructor in the JSU English department for seven years. Last year, he taught Freshman Composition, Oral Communication, American Literature, English Literature, Advanced Composition, and the Theory of Composition. He is currently serving as past president of the JSU chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, a national honor society for teachers, students, and alumni. He also returned to JSU’s National Writing Project as an Advanced Fellow and serves on its Advisory Board. Away from school, Don and his wife Amy (singer, vocal instructor, blogger and mom extraordinaire) both like to perform with the Theatre of Gadsden and are active members of their church. They have two children: Timothy, age nine, and Paul, who just turned three. Don has discovered that being a dad to a toddler at an age when most men are called Pawpaw is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. If he survives, he’ll never do it again!

**Christy Burns** served on the On the Brink Committee for emerging Southern writers and as co-sponsor for Sigma Tau Delta. In addition, she read entries for the Southern Playwrights competition and Writers Bowl.

**Gena Christopher** teaches technical writing, Alabama Literature, American Literature, The Bible as Literature, and oral communication. She serves on the JSU Writers Bowl Committee, the College of Arts and Sciences Student Research Symposium Committee, the On the Brink Committee, and the Writing Project Advisory Board. This year, Ms. Christopher was the chief writer for JSU’s NCAA Self-Study reports, the director of the JSU-NCN Bridge Program, and the editor of *Postscripts*.

**Margaret R. Copeland** has served on the Assessment Subcommittee and the JSU Institutional Effectiveness Committee. She also served as Coordinator of the Middle School Division for the "Imagining the Holocaust" Writing Competition, 2009.

**Randall Davis** served as discussion leader for the Eighteenth Annual Literature and Medicine Retreat sponsored by the Alabama College of Physicians. Works discussed included Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses*, Herb Gardner’s *A Thousand Clowns*, poetry by Thomas Hardy, and James Joyce’s *Dubliners*.

**Carmine Di Biase** published an article titled “Borrowed Identities and the Writer’s Exile: Joyce, Svevo and their Younger Brothers,” in *Bele Antiche Stòrie: Writing, Borders, and the Instability of Identity. Trieste, 1719-2007*. Edited by Charles Klopp. He also gave a two-hour lecture, “Hamlet: A Renaissance Traveler and Discoverer,” for New Horizons at UAB on January 8 and an abbreviated version of the same lecture for JSU’s Academe on February 21. Dr. Di Biase’s book, *Travel and Translation on the Early Modern Period*, was favorably reviewed in *Sixteenth Century Journal*, by Jane Beal. And, he served on the editorial board of *Aghios*, an annual dedicated to the works of Italo Svevo.

**Robert Felgar** gave a talk on the enduring significance of *Native Son* at the University of West Georgia's Richard Wright Centennial Celebration last fall, joined with other Wright scholars throughout the world to lobby the US Post Office for a stamp honoring Wright (it was unveiled at the main Chicago Post Office April 9th), agreed to provide an article on Wright's optics in his post-exilic fiction for a collection of essays to be published by the University Press of Mississippi, and helped settle an ongoing debate on andrewtobias.com (archived April 7, 2009) over whether infinitives can be split or not (he argued that since English is a Germanic language and since the notion of not splitting infinitives comes from Latin, a language in which infinitives can't be split, the whole issue isn't an issue, except for possible aesthetic reasons).

**Jennifer Foster** will be beginning her fourteenth year with the English Department in the fall of 2009. Over the past year, she served on the English Department hiring committee and delivered presentations on incorporating technology into the classroom for both the JSU Writing Project and the Department of Distance Learning. She worked as an advisor for the 2008 Orientation team and will do so again during the summer of 2009.

**Joanne Gates** was elected to a new term to serve as chair of the board of the Friends of Houston Cole Library. In November, the Friends hosted Robert Morgan (author of *Gap Creek* and, most recently, *Boone*). In January, local author Gene Howard spoke on his biography of former Alabama governor John Patterson. Joanne attended the Writing Project Advisory Board retreat and has edited fiction for the on-line repository of the works of Elizabeth Robins.

**Larry Gray** delivered papers at four conferences during the past year. Two were given at international conferences of Henry James scholars—in July 2008 at Newport, Rhode Island, and in April 2009, in Paris. The other two papers, on C. S. Lewis and on *All the King's Men*, were delivered at Northwestern University in Evansville, Illinois, and at SAMLA's convention in Louisville, Kentucky. His article on James's "The Jolly Corner" and John Cheever's "Seaside Houses" appears in the May 2009 issue of *Notes on Contemporary Literature*. His next two conference papers will be delivered at Notre Dame in June 2009 and in London at the British Film Institute in September 2009.

**Pitt Harding** was awarded tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. He presented a paper on "Milton and Lactantius: The Texture of Milton's Memory" at the 9th International Milton Symposium at the University of London. He also completed a chapter on the philosophical contexts of Milton's work for a book to be published by Cambridge University Press.

**John Hickman** frequently teaches American literature survey classes and freshman composition classes. He is a member of the Holocaust Remembrance Committee and serves as the high school coordinator for the "Imagining the Holocaust" Writing Contest; his other responsibilities with the event involve writing press releases and publicizing the event.

**Gloria Horton** serves as the Liaison Officer to NCTE for the Association of College English Teachers of Alabama, representing that organization on the NCTE Board of Directors. She is the chair of the steering committee for Academe, Jacksonville State University's organization in support of faculty teaching, scholarship, and service. She served as Faculty Chair of the 2009 United Way Campaign and served on the United Way 2009 Campaign Cabinet. She served as ex-officio chair of the College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Council Merit Pay Committee, and she was the 2009 chair of the Jacksonville State University Research Committee. Ms. Horton provided an in-service presentation for Jacksonville State University Regional In-service Center, called "Using Persona Writing to Help Students Find Their Voices," as part of a Writing in the 21st Century Conference in July 2008. Her poem, "Nocturne," was published in *Sampler*, the anthology of the Alabama State Society of Poets. She also presented "Using Persona Writing to Help Students Find Their Voices" at the annual conference of the Alabama College English Teachers Association, in February 2009. Additionally, Ms. Horton has served as editor of the *JSU Writing Project Newsletter*, editor of the *JSU Writing Project Anthology*, and editor of *The Academe Newsletter*. She serves as a reviewer for *The New McGraw-Hill Handbook 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*, as editor for the publications of the office of the Vice President for Institutional Advancement, and has written an article on the teaching of reading to be published by the National Writing Project's National Reading Initiative. She is chairing the Literacy in the Twenty-First Century Conference to be held on July 15, 2009, and is a coordinator of the JSU Language Arts Olympiad. She is Director of the JSU Writing Project.

**Bill Hug** wrote two book reviews for the *Anniston Star*. Dr. Hug also has an essay on photojournalist Jacob Riis under consideration at *Ethnic Studies Review*.

**Katie Johnson** continued teaching English Composition, Oral Communication, and American Literature. In addition, she assisted other faculty by reading for the Southern

Playwright Competition and the Imagining the Holocaust writing competition. She also served as a judge for the College of Arts and Sciences Student Symposium.

**John Jones** presented two conference papers, one on the variations in text-plate order in Blake's *Milton* for the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism and one on the way Blake's book production methods alters the nature of reading for the International Conference on Romanticism. Dr. Jones completed five short articles--two on Blake, one on Thomas Hobbes, one on industrialism, and one on slavery and the slave trade--for the *Facts on File Guide to Literary Romanticism*, which is due out this year. Also, Palgrave Macmillan has agreed to publish Dr. Jones's book on Blake, language, power, and self-annihilation.

**Raina Kostova** published the following: "Posthumous Writing: Mandesltam's Poetics" with Tony Brinkley. *Modernism/Modernity*. "Dialogic Imaginings: Stalin's Re-reading in the 1930s of the Brothers Karamazov" with Tony Brinkley. *The Dostoevsky Journal* and, Mandelstam, Osip. "Star" and "But Conscience Chooses..." by Tony Brinkley and Raina Kostova. *Beloit Poetry Journal*. She also presented at two conferences, one regional and one national. Dr. Kostova is preparing to present at an international conference at Brunel University in the UK in June 2009. She is also currently receiving conference paper abstracts for a panel which she is chairing at a regional conference in November of 2009.

**David Myer** serves on the Editorial Board for the *Journal of the Alabama Academy of Science*. He served as a reader/judge for the Imagining the Holocaust student writing competition. Last summer, he was an instructor for the JSU Bridge Program at the English Language Institute and served as a 2008-2009 Gamecock Orientation Advisor. He has been accepted as a 2009 teacher-fellow for the JSU Writing Project Summer Institute.

**Joy Maloney** served on the Writing Project Advisory Board and acted as judge for the Language Arts Olympiad, the Robert U. Moersch Short Fiction Competition, the Imagining the Holocaust Writing Competition, and the Robert U. Moersch Poetry Competition.

**Elizabeth Nelson** served on the English Department's Competency and Review Committees. She teaches both regular and online classes for the department.

**Andrea Porter** presented her paper titled "(De)signing the Contemporary Female Soldier" at the 40th Annual College English Association Conference, held in Pittsburgh, PA, in March. Four of the graduate students from Dr. Porter's Fall 2008 Introduction to Graduate Studies in English class attended the conference with her and presented a panel of papers on Sylvia Plath, written during the class. Dr. Porter also developed a course on Literature of the Vietnam War for May Term 2009.

**Deborah Prickett** is the English Department's Technology Liaison. She also chairs the EH 101-102 Committee.

**Teresa Reed** attended the biennial meeting of the New Chaucer Society, in Swansea, Wales, July 18--22, 2008, where she presented a paper called "In Thrall to History: A Reading of *Troilus and Criseyde*." She then traveled in Wales and Scotland for 10 days. At this year's meeting of the Southeastern Medieval Association, October 2-4, 2008, in St. Louis, Missouri, Dr. Reed presented a paper called "I Haz Paypurs on Langwage fer U, Srsly: Internet & Other Electronic Languages as a Topic for History of the English Language." May 7-10, 2009, was the 44th annual International Medieval Studies Congress in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where she presented a paper called "Faithful Observation: Alisoun of Bath, Representation, and the Gender of Christianity." Dr. Reed has also been involved with advising English majors and minors. In 2008-09, the English department had over 100 English majors registered.

**Valerie Rimpsey** continues to sit on the advisory committee for Student-Life Multicultural Programming. She also serves as secretary for the African-American Faculty Organization for Responsive Education (AFORE), and she is the faculty advisor for the Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Common Sense Media, and Exposure.

**Misty Sandlin** taught a variety of composition, literature, and oral communication courses. She also served as an English Education Liaison and judged several writing contests.

**Susan Sellers** just completed her 8th year as Director of the English Competency Exam, which includes coordinating the campus and Distance Learning exams. She serves as Scholarship Advisor for Zeta Tau Alpha, and she is the English Department representative for the Teacher Education Council and the Department of Secondary Education Advisory Council. Ms. Sellers serves on the following English Department Committees: EH101-102, Competency, Advanced Writing, and Speech.

**Steven Whitton** has just completed his 36th year as a member of the English Department. Recently, he gave a paper on William Bradford Huie and Hollywood for the tri-state Southern Literary Trail, and he remains a book reviewer for local media. He continues to work with ON THE BRINK, the JSU Writers Bowl, and the Southern Playwrights Competition. He also remains an active part of JSU's annual Holocaust Remembrance and of regional and state Holocaust organizations. He was just appointed Director of JSU's new Honors Program.

**Julia Wooster** continues to be the English Department "social director"; she also continues to serve on department committees, as well chair the Education-English Liason Committee. Ms. Wooster judged Imagining the Holocaust entries, volunteered for the Language Arts Olympiad, judged essays for The Writers Bowl, and attended various sports activities and Drama Department productions. She served as a judge for the College of Arts and Sciences Annual Student Symposium, and she continues to work to improve her Detective Fiction course.

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## **Rufus Kinney Retires**

Rufus Kinney retired in December of 2008 after twenty-four years of service to the English department. During his time at JSU, Mr. Kinney was faculty advisor to Phi Eta Sigma Freshman Honor Society. He edited the Writing Instruction Technology newsletter and published a personal essay in the *Reading Our Lives: Southern Autobiography Anthology*. He was also a favorite teacher of the freshman composition and oral communication courses.

Mr. Kinney received his B.A. from Washington & Lee University and an M.A. from the University of Montevallo. After two-years of service in the United States Navy, Kinney taught fifth grade before becoming an English instructor at the University of Montevallo. He joined the JSU faculty in 1984.

Along with his service to the English department, Rufus Kinney is a valued member of the Jacksonville community. He plans to spend his retirement working in community programs. Our department wishes Rufus well.

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*Postscripts*,  
the English Department alumni newsletter, is now an online publication, available at  
<http://www.jsu.edu/depart/english/postscrp/index.htm>.  
You may download it there.

**Please look for *Postscripts* online each year in August.**

If you prefer a print copy of the newsletter, please call Susan, the English Department office assistant, at (256) 782-5412.

Thank you for your continued support of our endeavors,  
Gena Christopher  
*Postscripts* editor